

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSEL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1692

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SP
SUBJECT: AN INSIDER EXPRESSES CONFUSION AT GOS POLITICAL
INTENTIONS

1. JOSE MIGUEL ORTI BORDAS' CONVERSATION WITH THE CHARGE
MARCH 3 WAS SPRINKLED WITH PERSONAL POLITICAL VIEWS AND
CONCENTRATED LARGELY UPON THE PROBLEM OF BUILDING A COHERENT
POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN THE ADVENT OF THE ELECTIONS
(SEPTEL FOR COMMENTS ON PUBLIC ORDER). ORTI BORDAS SAID
THAT THE SITUATION RE PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ INTENTIONS,
THE KEY TO THE MATTER, HAD CHANGED FROM LAST WEEK WHEN
PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ HAD SEEMINGLY INCLINED TOWARDS RUNNING FOR
THE PARLIAMENT AS THE LEADER OF A CENTRIST POLITICAL
FORMATION. NOW HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT SUAREZ HAD REVERSED
HIMSELF AND WAS INCLINED TO STAY ABOVE THE BATTLE. HE
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HOPED TO SEE SUAREZ SHORTLY TO PRESS THE VIEW THAT
SUAREZ SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD, BELIEVING THERE WAS NO
ASSURANCE OTHERWISE THAT A LASTING PARLIAMENTARY COALI-
TION COULD BE PUT TOGETHER AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

2. THE MATTER OF COURSE HINGES ON THE FINAL WORDING OF
THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ON "INCOMPATIBILITIES" (THE

DISQUALIFYING OF THE HOLDERS OF CERTAIN PUBLIC OFFICES FROM RUNNING FOR THE CORTES.) FROM THE BEGINNING, HE SAID, PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS AND LIKE OFFICIALS WHO COULD EXERCISE CLOSE-IN INFLUENCE ON THE ELECTIONS WERE TO BE EXCLUDED. THE PROBLEM LAY IN WHAT TO DO ABOUT CABINET AND SUB-CABINET OFFICIALS. NOWHERE ELSE IN A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WERE CABINET MEMBERS PRECLUDED FROM RUNNING FOR OFFICE; RATHER THEY HAD TO STAND AND WIN IN ORDER TO REMAIN IN THE CABINET. THERE, THE KING COULD APPOINT SUAREZ AND OTHER CABINET MINISTERS TO THE SENATE, SO THAT IF CABINET MINISTERS WERE EXCLUDED, THE ONLY ONES WHO WOULD ACTUALLY HAVE TO STEP DOWN WOULD BE SUB-CABINET OFFICIALS LIKE HIMSELF. BUT THIS BEGGED THE ISSUE OF PARLIAMENTARY COHERENCE. SUAREZ WAS ENORMOUSLY POPULAR. IF HE LED A PARTY, IT WOULD BE THE CORE OF A COHERENT GOVERNING BLOC. IF NOT, PARLIAMENTARY FRAGMENTATION MIGHT THREATEN SUAREZ' POSITION.

3. HE UNDERSTOOD SUAREZ' THINKING TO BE THAT IF HE RAN HE WOULD OPT FOR A "CENTER-CENTER" PARTY OF HIS OWN MAKING RATHER THAN IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH AN EXISTING PARTY LIKE THE CABANILLAS/AREILZA-LED CENTRO DEMOCRATICO. HE BELIEVED THAT A "TWO-SIDED" CENTER WITH SUAREZ LEADING THE MOST IMPORTANT BLOC WOULD BE BETTER THAN A SINGLE PARTY. THE SUAREZ PARTY WOULD EAT INTO THE STRENGTH OF FRAGA'S ALIANZA POPULAR WHILE THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO WOULD PROVIDE A MINORITY PARTNER. HE OBSERVED THAT THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO HAD, BY ITS INTERNAL DISSENSIONS, PROVEN INCAPABLE

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OF MOUNTING A MASSIVE CENTER GROUP.

4. SO FAR AS THE PSOE HISTORICAL SECTOR LEGALIZATION WAS CONCERNED, THE GOS HAD FIRST ARRANGED FOR GONZALEZ' PSOE TO GET THE PRISTINE LABEL. AFTERWARDS, THE GOS HAD NO CHOICE, HE ARGUED, BUT TO LEGALIZE THE HISTORICOS, WHO HAD SUPPORTED SUAREZ, AND WHO HAD APPLIED LEGITIMATELY FIRST. INTERIOR HAD TOLD GONZALEZ TO TAKE THE CASE TO COURT, IF HE WISHED, AT ALL EVENTS, THE GOS, MORE THAN THE WEST GERMANS, HAD "MADE" FELIPE GONZALEZ IN THE BELIEF THAT THERE HAD TO BE SOME COMPETITION ON THE LEFT FOR THE PCE. HE DID NOT THINK GONZALEZ COULD AFFORD THE PERMANENT WARFARE IMPLIED IN JOINING A UNITED FRONT WITH THE PCE.

5. ORTI BORDAS NOTED THE LACK OF CONSISTENCY IN THE GOS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS IN THAT IT HAD PRESENTED A STRONG BRIEF AGAINST LEGALIZATION IN THE SUPREME COURT, PERMITTED THE EURO-COMMUNIST SUMMIT AND THROWN OUT A SOVIET DIPLOMAT ALL IN THE SAME BREATH. THIS AMBIGUITY

WAS PROBABLY GOOD POLITICALLY BUT REFLECTS DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE GOS. THE COURTS, HE SAID CATEGORICALLY, COULD NOT THROW THE LEGALIZATION ISSUE BACK TO THE GOVT. HE RATHER THOUGHT THE COURT WOULD RULE AGAINST LEGALIZATION BUT WAS NOT CERTAIN. HE FELT THE LEGAL CASE AGAINST LEGALIZATION WAS STRONG, ALTHOUGH THE POLITICAL CASE FAVORED LEGALIZATION.

6. COMMENT: WE HAD INDICATIONS THAT SUAREZ WAS COMING AROUND TO THE IDEA OF STANDING FOR ELECTION, BUT THIS CONVERSATION AND SUBSEQUENT PRESS REPORTS THIS MORNING SUGGEST SECOND THOUGHTS, THOUGH NO ONE CAN BE SURE. "EL PAIS" ADDUCES THE STRONG CRITICISM OF THE LAST FEW DAYS FROM BOTH THE RIGHT AND LEFT OPPOSITION TO THE GOS (THE ALIANZA POPULAR ON THE ONE HAND AND THE TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION ON THE OTHER). ALSO, WHILE SEVERAL POLITICAL "FAMILIES" WANT SUAREZ TO RUN, THEY EACH WANT HIM ON THEIR OWN TICKET. AT ALL EVENTS, THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AWAITS SUAREZ'S DECISION.
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